

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A connection management apparatus for connecting a plurality of physically connectable network devices based on connection paths set for individual users, comprising:

10 a client port connectable to the users via a network;

a server port connectable to a server;

a lookup table including one or more pairs of tags and destination addresses, each of said  
15 pairs indicating a user and a next destination of a received packet by using a tag attached to the received packet as a search key wherein said attached tag indicates a user and a destination; and

a tag replacement and transmission part  
20 replacing a tag of the received packet with a tag detected from the lookup table and transmitting the resulting packet to a destination address detected from the lookup table;

wherein a packet received from one of the  
25 users and the server is transmitted to one of the plurality of network devices and a packet received from one of the plurality of network devices is transmitted to one of the plurality of network devices, the server and the users.

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2. The connection management apparatus as  
35 claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of network devices are connected in a star topology.

3. The connection management apparatus as  
5 claimed in claim 2, wherein in the lookup table  
search keys are grouped for each of the users.

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4. The connection management apparatus as  
claimed in claim 3, wherein in the lookup table the  
search keys are further grouped for each of an up-  
directional connection path of a packet transmitted  
15 from a client side to a server side and a down-  
directional connection path of a packet transmitted  
from the server side to the client side.

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5. The connection management apparatus as  
claimed in claim 4, wherein the lookup table further  
includes one or more physical ports corresponding to  
25 search keys together with the pairs of tags and  
destination addresses each of which indicates a user  
and a next destination.

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6. The connection management apparatus as  
claimed in claim 1, wherein the lookup table is  
rewritable through a terminal.

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7. The connection management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the tag is a VLAN tag.